

NSC BRIEFING

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

30 April 1958

LEBANON

- I. Intense political maneuvering continues in Lebanon.
  - A. President Chamoun may decide next week whether to risk internal disorders, partly inspired by Egypt and Syria, in order to gain second term.
  - B. Principal pro-Western alternative candidate is army chief Gen. Shihab, who has been reluctant enter politics and fears effect on army, which he has built up over several years.
  - C. Chamoun has offered to stand aside in favor of Shihab, but general has not made up his mind and sees ruse by wily president.
  - D. Shihab has become concerned, however, over possible troubles which seem likely if Chamoun chooses to run again.
    1. Syrians and Egyptians are running guns to opposition elements; some anti-Chamoun Druze are being armed and trained in Syria.
    2. Chamoun's supporters are also receiving arms--Shah of Iran is one source.
    3. Fighting among tribesmen has already occurred; Egyptian-Syrian attempt earlier this month to produce tribal rebellion failed, but similar attempts likely in future.
  - E. Bulk of Lebanon's Sunni Moslems and some Christians--including Maronite patriarch--oppose Chamoun.

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1. However, most Christians and important minority groups--  
Shia Moslems, etc.--probably feel their safety and  
status basically linked with fate of a pro-Western  
government of which Chamoun is symbol.
- II. To complicate picture further, Foreign Minister Malik is making  
strong pleas for more US economic aid.
  - A. He says he wants \$15,000,000 this fiscal year, and has  
"suggested" US underwrite 6-year development to tune of  
\$25,000,000 per year.
- III. Other pro-Western leaders in Middle East are taking position  
that Chamoun's re-election with Western support is important  
factor in their assessments of their own positions vis-a-vis  
the West.
  - A. Shah of Iran, whose arms aid to Chamoun noted above, is  
leading exponent this kind of thinking.
  - B. King Hussayn of Jordan says he is sending Chamoun more arms.
  - C. Iraqis, Turks and Pakistanis have urged us to support Chamoun,
  - D. Result these arguments is to make Chamoun international  
symbol of pro-Westernism to West's friends in area as well  
as to Nasir's and Soviet propagandists.